

**Town of Superior  
Work Session  
Thursday, March 15, 2012, 6:00 P.M.  
Superior Senior Center  
360 W. Main Street, Superior, AZ 85173  
MINUTES**

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Jayme Valenzuela called the work session to order at 6:09 p.m.

**B. SALUTE TO THE FLAG**

Mayor Valenzuela led the Salute to the Flag.

**C. OPENING PRAYER**

Council Member Chris Tomerlin led the opening prayer.

**D. ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Council Members Hank Gutierrez (arrived 6:40 p.m. after roll call), Chris Tomerlin, John Tameron (arrived 6:12 p.m. after roll call), Gilbert Aguilar, Soyla "Kiki" Peralta, Mayor Jayme Valenzuela and Vice Mayor Olga Lopez; **Absent:** N/A

**E. DISCUSSION**

1. 2010-2011 Ambulance Report and Revenue/Expense Analysis

Fire Operations Chief Todd Pryor presented a report analyzing the ambulance revenue and expenses and answered council questions. Referring to a document in the packet he said transports were on track from what they had last year. They had 307 last year and 296 this year. He gave details of the expenses and revenues.

There was a discussion of Omya and property taxes. Interim Town Clerk Rita Wentzel said there was another factor that affected this. Because they were in a penalty year as to property taxes, no property tax increase was going to be received. They only will receive the exact same property tax as last year.

Council Member Peralta asked if they are going to have a hearing before the next fiscal year. Ms. Wentzel said it has already been established that the OMYA money will come in. It depends if they go over their property tax threshold whether they need a truth in taxation hearing. That would take place perhaps late July or the very first part of August.

Chief Pryor said he was hoping to start talking to council about a funded reserve for the ambulance service. At some point one of those ambulances is going to blow a transmission at a significant cost. He would like to have at least 10 percent contingency in their budget.

They can't talk about that this year but hopefully they will be able to talk about that in the next budgetary year.

He discussed \$57,000 in accounts receivable still uncollected. They made every attempt to collect. If no response, they are sent to the collection agency, which makes every attempt to collect the money. If they can't get any contact, it is written off. There was a higher debt write-off last year than this year primarily due to the changes in AHCCCS.

He discussed how somewhere in the past two years someone separated the ambulance from the fire department and they are now paid out of two funds (fire/general fund and ambulance/enterprise fund). The enterprise fund is by definition supposed to break even. The ambulance has never broken even for the simple reason that the revenues required by staff for a 24/7 ambulance aren't generated by the customer base they have in town. The fire department portion of property tax has always made up that difference. Hopefully they will be getting that fixed in the next fiscal year. He doesn't know how they will fix it this year. It will be quite a mess. He doesn't know how they will do it.

They have looked at possible ways of increasing revenues. There are many ways to increase revenues. He is not suggesting any of these, just presenting for council consideration:

Kearny bills for EMS refusal. Tri-City does not. Southwest Ambulance does not. Southwest bills for ALS care. If it is a refusal, they pull out their IV bag, they give them drugs and then they charge them. They don't charge if there is no care given. Superior had 235 refusals last year.

Council Member Aguilar asked if it was noted when there was a refusal and what was the follow-up. Chief Pryor said they do report it and it is logged on their systems and they keep track of it just like any other call. It probably would go down if they started charging for it for the simple reason people would be less likely to call. His concern is from a safety point of view if people started delaying care because they are afraid of getting charged.

Mayor Valenzuela questioned whether the fee would apply to people in town and passersby on the highway. Chief Pryor said they had to charge everyone the same. They can, however, charge based on the level of care. Mayor Valenzuela said he was not asking how they charge, he was asking for a breakdown of out-of-towners versus in-towners. Chief Pryor said he did not have a strict number of that. If you look at the motor vehicle accidents most are out-of-towners, most of the others are in-towners at home. The mayor asked for his guess. Chief Pryor said maybe 40-50 out-of-towners that they give service to without charge. He discussed a manual survey they could do by going through the documentation.

Vice Mayor Lopez asked whether the refusals occurred during the day, or after hours or on weekends. At one time the clinic wasn't open five days. Now it is open five days. Is it possible the number might be going down now that the clinic is open more often? Chief Pryor said he has not seen that so he can't answer. He said they get a lot of calls after hours and during the day. They get a lot of calls for public assistance, such as people falling off their bed. They don't want any care or to be touched.

Vice Mayor Lopez said if he goes back and does a study and finds that some of those refusals were actually following ALS, are those then billable? Chief Pryor said if they decide to adopt a policy where ALS is billable, they probably could then bill them. It probably would be 20-30 calls a year. He detailed how this could amount to \$17,000 per year. They could start charging for every refusal but it is very difficult to say how that would affect it and he doesn't think from a public safety point of view it is the best. Kearny does this because their coverage area is larger than Superior and they don't get any fire tax to cover expenses. Superior gets a fire tax so he has always considered it a bit of a wash. But that is a council decision to decide what and when they bill. That is just something to consider.

One of the ways they lose revenue is transport service by Southwest, he said. The last one they paid was transported out of town. That was partially because their ambulance was out of service for four or five months, their second ambulance. If the first ambulance breaks down they would be completely out of service.

There were further comments, questions and discussion, including Medicare patients and insurance. Ms. Wentzel said one aspect was whether or not the patient had insurance. That was one of the hazards. But they are going to see what they can do next year regarding the Resolution emergency fund to develop a contingency fund. They could work on it during the fiscal year and be prepared for the following year.

#### **F. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Council Member Tomerlin moved to adjourn the work session. Vice Mayor Lopez seconded. Mayor Valenzuela adjourned the work session at 6:57 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Work Session of the Town Council of the Town of Superior held on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2012. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

/s/

---

**Rita M. Wentzel, Interim Town Clerk**

These minutes were compiled and transcribed by Cindy Tracy, an independent contractor. Final editing of these minutes and their content is completed and verified by Town of Superior staff members.